



My father's dream for Uganda and Buganda

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I attended a dinner gala to launch the Makerere University Female Scholarship Foundation at the Kampala Serena Hotel on November 20, 2010. Prof Apolo Nsibambi the Prime Minister, was the guest of honour.

At some point the Emcee of the night, George Piwang-Jalobo, quoted from an article written by my late father, E.M.K. Mulira, nearly 30 years ago. Now George from Pakwach also happens to be the northern region representative of the Uganda Land Owners Association of which I am the chairperson. He got my attention when he said my father's article offended him when he first read it; that it was the usual Buganda arrogance.

Piwang-Jalobo then narrated two things that have since made him change his mind about my father's article. One is his work for national reconciliation across Uganda's north-south divide in the context of the 20-year long LRA war. The other is the work of Sylvia Nagginda, the Nabagereka of Buganda, especially as patron of the Christian Children's Fund. She launched an appeal for the children of northern Uganda in 2003 at the Kampala Sheraton Hotel. George said Dr William Kalema represented the business community at the launch and said: "The Nabagereka loves all her children north and south".

Several of Buganda's ministers accompanied the Nabagereka to the launch, including Chrysostom Musingo, then Kabaka's education minister and in charge of the Kabaka Education Fund. Soon after the appeal, Piwang-Jalobo said he took to Musingo a young man from Karamoja in need of 'A' level scholarship.

He got a full scholarship at Lubiri Senior Secondary School where he completed his 'A' level successfully and was admitted to Makerere University on Government scholarship. The young man has since graduated from university.

Piwang-Jalobo concluded, "The Nabagereka unfurled the glory of Buganda to benefit the children of northern Uganda", and she proved what Kalema said. Piwang-Jalobo then concluded it was the Nabagereka's work that finally made him understand what late Mulira wrote over 30 years ago. But what did my father write? Here below is an excerpt from his article: *The True Unity For Uganda* by E.M.K. Mulira

Uganda is like the hand of man. Buganda is the palm and the other tribes the fingers (although they are more than five but for argument's sake, call them the fingers). The usefulness of the hand is in the unity of those parts of the hand. Cut off the fingers, the palm will be rendered helpless; similarly, if the fingers discard the palm, they will not only have no use but they will also lose each other as they will have nothing to hold them together.

Let me add to this debate by giving my own version of what would be unity for Uganda. Short-sighted cranks have suggested, from time to time, measures of suicidal nature. On one side, we have heard of people advocating secession of Buganda from the rest. It will not work.

From the other side, from the fingers, so to speak, we have heard of other cranks who advocate the destruction of Buganda first and that when it has been destroyed, they will take the place of the palm and enjoy a wider spectrum than that of their current positions. It will not work either.

Therefore, the true builders of Uganda are those who, realising the different assets given to each part, work in such a way as will send blood to each component to enable it to play its part for the total development of all. To whom much is given, much will be required, of course, and in return respect must be given where it is due.

For nothing, you get nothing. Anything less than that is from the devil. And the greatest enemies of Uganda are of two natures: First, those who clamour for the secession of Buganda.

Second, those who spread the devil's vice of 'destroy Buganda first.' (emphasis is mine)

Last weekend I rummaged through my father's papers. I happened on the original draft of that article in his own hand-writing. I was so excited that I quickly called Piwang-Jalobo with the news. He said I should write about my father's dream for Uganda's unity.

I can only say E.M.K Mulira had not envisioned a time would come when all parts of Uganda, the so-called fingers of Uganda, would be wealth producers. Today, we know differently. With all the oil and mineral finds in other regions of Uganda, the equation is even more dynamic. Therefore, it behooves us all to unite and stay together as Ugandans. Then shall we all enjoy our God-given wealth together.

May I add, too, that the sum total of all this is the land of Uganda — our unifier and 'mother'? It is our bounden duty to love and nurture our land.

As we go to the general elections on February 18, I urge all Ugandans to remember that we are one because our destiny is one. We shall stand or fall together regardless of our political, ethnic or regional differences. Haven't we bloodied Mother Uganda long enough?

Isn't she in great need of healing? We should not even contemplate further bloodshed on Mother Uganda, whatever the outcome of the elections.

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